



TUSHAR IMDAD

UNLOCK YOUR INFINITE POTENTIAL

ISLAMIC TIME MANAGEMENT

Strategies from Quran & Hadith that
Bring Barakah into Your Life



TIME MANAGEMENT IN THE QUR'AN

A Muslim's first source of guidance in life is the Qur'an, and so we turn to the Book of Allah for our initial inspiration in time management.

Now there are countless ayahs that deal with time, because time = life and the Qur'an teaches us how to live our life!

Modern life is hectic so you are likely to be very busy. Although the Qur'an is known for lengthy surahs such as Ya Sin or Al- Baqara, Allah in His wisdom, has provided us with very short surahs to help us reflect on the truth – even when we're really busy.

So in this e-book we will focus on one of these short surahs – a treasure from the book of treasures. And it's actually called 'Time'!

SURAH AL-ASR (CHAPTER 103)

It's good to start with what we know. Most of us have committed to memory this beautiful, short surah: Al-Asr (Quran 103:1-3). Admittedly we often choose to recite it in our salah because of its brevity, rather than its profound meanings. And yet Imam Shafi'i (r.a.) asserted that if Allah had only revealed this surah, it would have been enough for the guidance of all humanity!

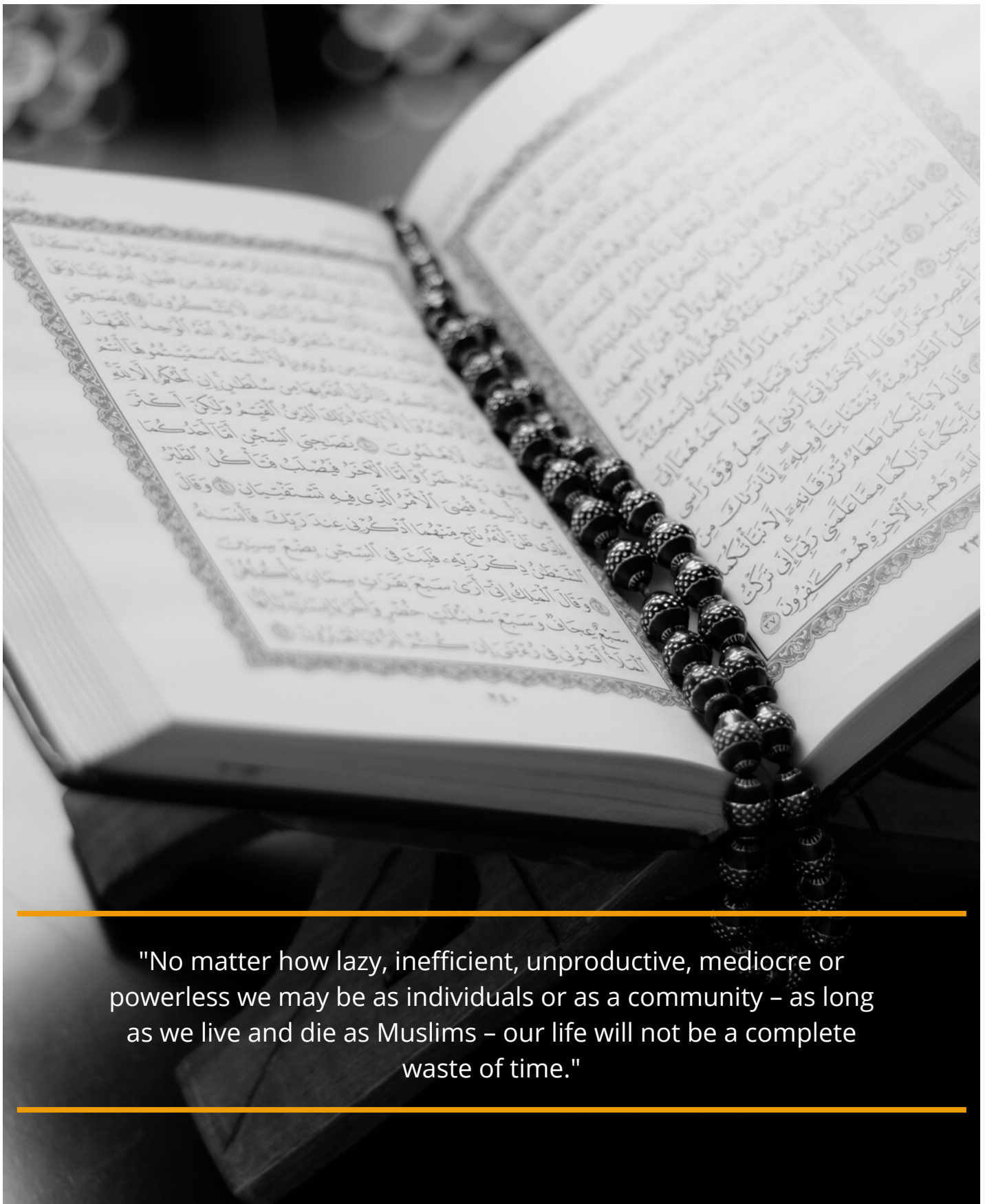
Allah begins the surah by taking an oath "wa al-'Asr", the title of the surah, which means 'by Time'. Anything Allah Most High swears by in the Qur'an is a tremendous matter, such as '*wa al-Fajr*' (by the Dawn) or '*wa al-Shams*' (by the sun). Starting a surah by an oath in the time of the Prophet (Allah bless him give him peace) was a method to draw the attention of the listener. Time is a concept that fascinated and awed the Arabs then, and it still fascinates us now.

Inna al-insaana la fi khusr (Verily man is in a state of loss). The second verse starts by describing the general state of humanity – a state of loss, failure and a life which is a waste of time.


But the third verse starts with a glorious exception: *Illā-allathina aamanu* (Except those who believe). Here then, the Qur'anic paradigm gives us, as Muslims, immense hope. No matter how lazy, inefficient, unproductive, mediocre or powerless we may be as individuals or as a community – as long as we live and die as Muslims – our life will not be a complete waste of time.

Conversely, no matter how busy, productive, efficient, successful and powerful non-Muslims may appear to be in this world – as long as they die rejecting Islam – none of their works are accepted.

This reminds us of the timeless principle of Islam: *innama al-'amaalu bi in-niyyat* (Actions are judged by intentions); any work or skill, be it running a company, serving the community or time management in general, must be acceptable to Allah for it to have any lasting benefit. If we intend to set up a soup kitchen for the homeless, for example, and the whole project flops, as long as we intended it for Allah, we will be rewarded as if the project was the stunning success we hoped it would be.



"No matter how lazy, inefficient, unproductive, mediocre or powerless we may be as individuals or as a community – as long as we live and die as Muslims – our life will not be a complete waste of time."



But if we were to succeed in building a massive corporate empire, we will gain nothing but regret in the Next Life, if we intended other than Allah's good pleasure. Even outwardly pious actions, such as building masjids or helping other people or praying, could even be punished if our intentions are to show off. So the Muslim's first rule of time management is seeking acceptance from Allah – checking our intentions – which Surah al-Asr so succinctly reminds us.

TIME MANAGEMENT IN HADITH

Allah's final messenger, Prophet Muhammad (Allah bless him and give him peace) left us incredible examples of productivity and time management. His whole life is the best model of how to spend our time.

Just look at the profound lessons from a single hadith:

"Take advantage of five matters before five other matters: your youth before you become old; your health, before you fall sick; your wealth, before you become poor; your free time before you become preoccupied, and your life, before your death."

(Hakim & Musnad Imam Ahmad. Sahih)

The scholars regard this as one of the core hadiths of the religion as it spurs one to right action in so many different life circumstances. It contains two key principles with respect to Islam's approach to time management: a sense of urgency towards our life and expressing thanks for our blessings.

The whole language of this hadith points to the limited nature of our life and how time is running out. In **Surah al-Rahman, verse 26**, Allah beautifully states *"Kullu man 'alayha faan"* (All that is on earth will perish), describing the essential reality that every passing moment is a moment that brings our death closer; lifespan is like an upturned sand-timer and the last grain could drop soon.

So the Prophet (s.a.w.) reminds us to act quickly before old age, before sickness, before our money decreases, before we get too busy and before our death. In other words, we must act now before it's too late.

This links to the second principle of shukr, or gratefulness. Each one of the five matters are five blessings of the highest magnitude: youth (which Arabs have traditionally defined as less than 40!), health, wealth, free time and life itself.

"We should spend our youth in seeking beneficial knowledge; our wealth in sadaqa; our energy to worship Allah more."



HOW THEN DO WE GIVE THANKS FOR THESE BLESSINGS?

Allah, Most Glorious, has informed us of the secret of keeping and indeed increasing our blessings:

"If you are grateful, I shall certainly give you increase" (Qur'an 14:7).

Beyond thanking Allah regularly with our tongues, scholars explain that true gratefulness is to "use the blessing for what they were intended for" or as Junayd al-Baghdadi (r.a.) explained at a mere seven years of age: "That one not disobey Allah using the blessings He has given."

So, for instance, we should spend our youth in seeking beneficial knowledge; our wealth in sadaqa; our energy to worship Allah more. The last two matters mentioned in the hadith relate directly to time management. Our free time is what we have left to work with.

In **Surah al-Inshirah (94:7)**, an oft-recited verse, "*fa iza faraghta fansab*", Allah commands us:

'So when you are free, toil on [in worship]!'

After a hard day's work in the office, kitchen or school our first inclination is to rest. Yet the Prophet(s.a.w.) - who had more responsibilities and hard work than many of us put together - was commanded to 'toil on'. This is why we read of his long hours of Salah in the night to the extent that his feet swelled.

I remember a scholar once criticizing the Western work culture of counting the hours to 5 P.M., the days to the weekend and the weeks to the holidays. As a former school teacher, I can attest that in my profession we are accustomed to constantly counting down till the holidays!

However, for the Muslim, whether it is the evening/morning, workday/holiday, weekday/weekend, our goal and purpose for every moment should be to worship Allah in the best way possible.

"We should spend our youth in seeking beneficial knowledge; our wealth in sadaqa; our energy to worship Allah more."

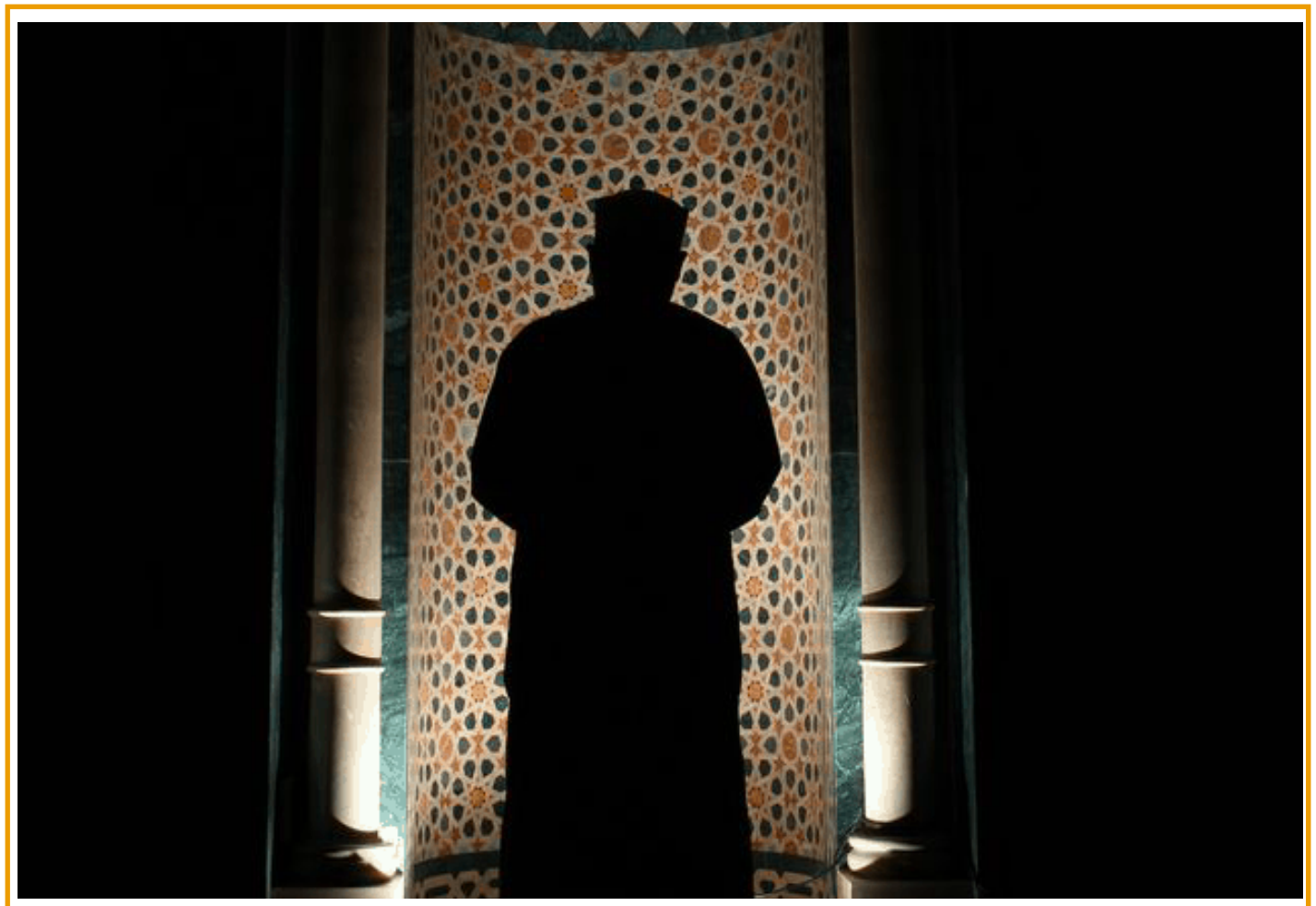


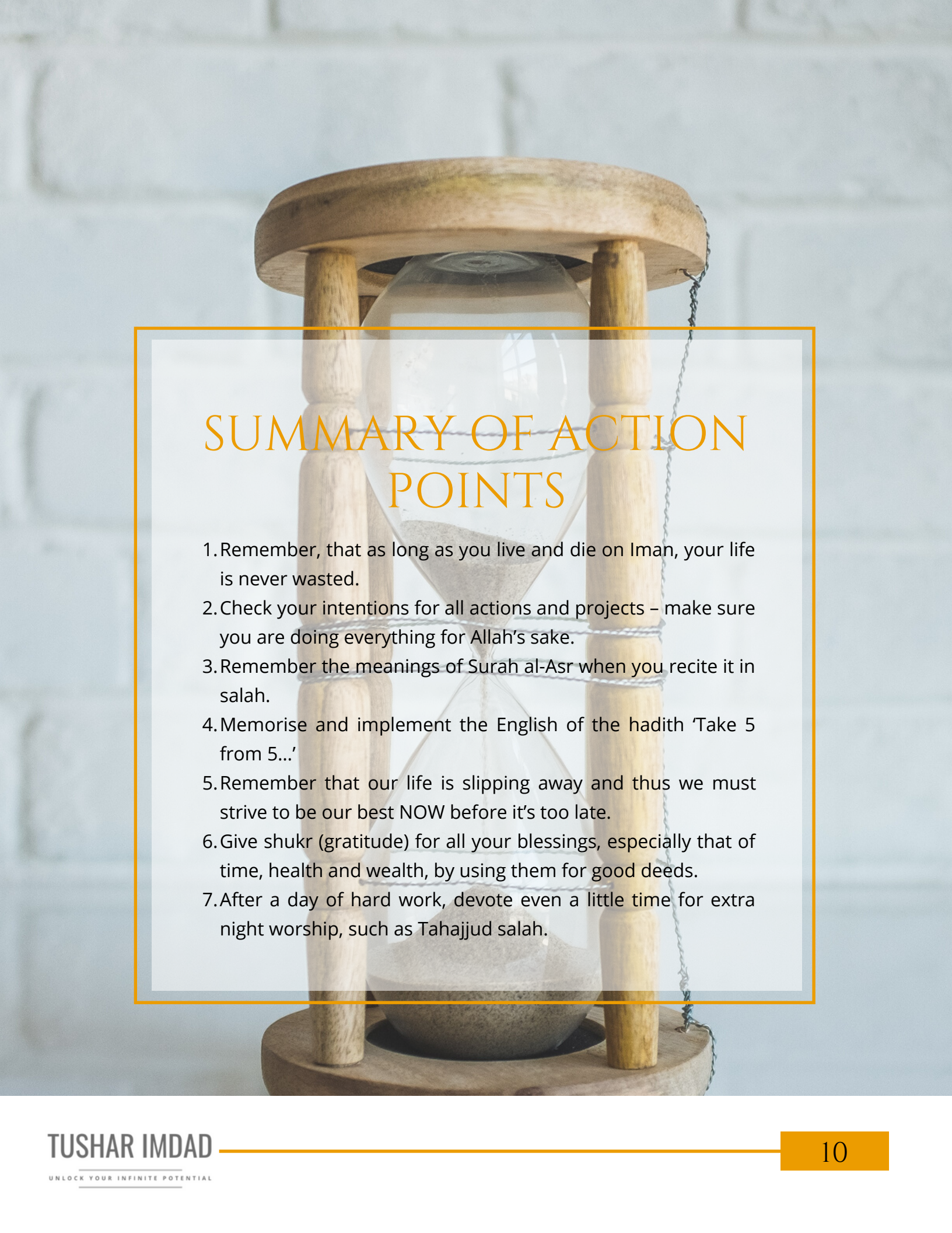
When we're at work, we're happy to work for the sake of Allah; when we are home, we're happy to worship Allah.

No doubt this is how the early Muslims, the scholars and the pious from every generation lived. I once lived next door to a local Imam and I can tell you that when he's not at work with his wife teaching at the madrasa, he's at home teaching Hifz to his children.

Though you and I may be far from such incredible striving, we can at least ensure that a portion of each night is reserved for toiling in worship. The scholars recommend even a few rakahs of Tahajjud before Fajr comes in; if that's too challenging, then pray them after Isha, before you sleep.

By devoting at least a small portion of each night to worship, we can hope that our life - the fifth and final blessing mentioned in the hadith - is not wasted.





SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS

1. Remember, that as long as you live and die on Iman, your life is never wasted.
2. Check your intentions for all actions and projects – make sure you are doing everything for Allah's sake.
3. Remember the meanings of Surah al-Asr when you recite it in salah.
4. Memorise and implement the English of the hadith 'Take 5 from 5...'
5. Remember that our life is slipping away and thus we must strive to be our best NOW before it's too late.
6. Give shukr (gratitude) for all your blessings, especially that of time, health and wealth, by using them for good deeds.
7. After a day of hard work, devote even a little time for extra night worship, such as Tahajjud salah.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Delivering a mixture of webinars, masterclasses, online courses and coaching, Tushar's services have attracted delegates as varied as CEOs, corporate professionals, housewives, dentists and scholars from places spanning the UK, US and Middle East.

Since 2009 he has published articles and delivered training for ProductiveMuslim.com, SeekersGuidance.org and Qibla.com (now Kiflayn). In recent years he has immersed himself in productivity systems, learning from world-class experts such as Demir Bentley, the authors of The One Thing, Leo Babuta and James Clear.

Tushar's dynamic and popular courses include: 'Principles of Islamic Time Management', 'Time Tactics 101' and 'The Breakthrough Habit'. He is one of the only coaches in the world who combine cutting-edge productivity systems, scientific habit-forming programmes and Allah-centred focus. Since You can learn more about Tushar here: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/tushar-imdad0a466b13/>

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